

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. Please cancel claims 55, 57, 59, 69, 70, 72, 80-109, and 111, and amend claim 110 and 112-121, as follows:

Listing of Claims:

1-109. (Canceled)

110. (Currently amended) A method of manufacturing a polishing pad for planarization of a microelectronic-device substrate assembly, comprising:

depositing an intermediate layer ~~of material~~ comprised of a material selected from the group consisting of: silica nitride, ceria, silica, alumina, titania, titanium nitride, a ceramic material or a metallic material, over a first layer of a polymeric material,

depositing a plurality of pattern elements over an upper surface of the intermediate layer, each pattern element directly contacting the upper surface of the intermediate layer and having a portion projecting away from the first layer of the polymeric material thereby forming a contour surface projecting away from the intermediate layer; and

covering the contour surfaces with a hard cover layer comprising a material selected from the group consisting of: silica nitride, ceria, silica, alumina, titanic nitride, titania, titanium, zirconia, a nitride and a ceramic, that contacts portions of the upper surface of the intermediate layer and conforms to the contour surfaces to form nodules from the portions of the hard cover layer over the contour surfaces, the nodules projecting away from the upper surface of the intermediate layer and the first layer of polymeric material.

111. (Canceled)

112. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~111~~ 110. wherein the intermediate layer is comprised of silica nitride.

113. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~44~~ 110, wherein the intermediate layer is comprised of ceria.

114. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~44~~ 110, wherein the intermediate layer is comprised of silica.

115. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~44~~ 110, wherein the intermediate layer is comprised of alumina.

116. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~44~~ 110, wherein the intermediate layer is comprised of titanium nitride.

117. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~44~~ 110, wherein the intermediate layer is comprised of titania.

118. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~44~~ 110, wherein the intermediate layer is comprised of titanium.

119. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~44~~ 110, wherein the intermediate layer is comprised of zirconia.

120. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~44~~ 110, wherein the intermediate layer is a metallic layer.

121. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~44~~ 110, wherein the intermediate layer is a ceramic layer.